

# **AYR HOUSING AID CENTRE**

Independent Housing Advice  
Service within South Ayrshire

## **ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY**

**APRIL 2013 – JUNE 2014**

**Scottish Charity No: SCO18186**

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## **CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

1. Alex Anderson, Chairperson
2. Cllr Phillip Saxton
3. Stuart McCammond
4. Fiona McDonald
5. Ethel Riach, Treasurer
6. Alan Shaw
7. Alan Berry

## **CENTRE STAFF**

John Mulholland, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary

Suzanne Slavin, Advice and Tenure Sustainment Manager

Neil Gray, Senior Tenure Sustainment Officer

Claire Lewis, Tenure Sustainment Officer (Started 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013)

Elsbeth Lloyd, Tenure Sustainment Officer (Started 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

Jill McNaught, Housing Adviser

Jacqui Gregory, Housing Adviser

Lieca Malkin, Tenant Advice and Information Officer (Started 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014)

Sarah Bone, Senior Education and Engagement Officer

Karen Taylor, Administrative Officer

Joseph Sproat, Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Riddell, Office Junior (Employment Ended 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014)

Marilyn Ross (Admin Support Officer (Started 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014)

Suzanne Moffat, First Home Officer

Jennifer Wearing, Tenure Sustainment Officer (Employment ended March 2014)

**This is a summary of the Annual Report which focuses on main issues from the full comprehensive report. If you wish a copy of the full report please contact the Centre, 01292 288111 or email the Centre [ayr\\_hac@hotmail.com](mailto:ayr_hac@hotmail.com)**

## Synopsis of Annual Report 2013/14

This summary should be read in conjunction with the Annual Report; it seeks to highlight a number of important issues from the Report. The Centre's primary concern is the impact on our Service Users and benefits to other parties are secondary to this clear objective.

### Service Users

- Centre opened a total 2,056 cases, 263 in our rural areas
- Centre opened 785 cases for services users with disabilities
- Centre opened 284 cases for service users between the ages of 16-24
- Centre opened 165 cases for service users over pension age
- Tenure Sustainment in 158 cases 24 overlapping at start of the year
- A total of 946 children were part of service users households
- 684 of our cases concerned homelessness
- 534 cases concerned the private rented sector
- 85 cases concerned the owner occupied sector

### Service User Outcomes

- Centre prevented homelessness in 274 cases
- 190 services users permanently re-housed
- 415 service users acted on advice of the Centre
- 1400 cases had a positive or likely positive outcome
- Arrears reduced across all sectors by £241,839
- 31 Home owners tenures were stabilised and homelessness prevented

### Third Party Beneficiaries

- Council rent accounts £191,717
- Housing Association rent accounts £3,128
- Private sector rent accounts £32,028
- Owner Occupied accounts £5,594
- Other, mainly First Home, £9,371
- Future rental income to all sectors £1,590,940
- Value of homeless prevention £2,466,000 (relates to accommodation costs)
- Estimated Value to secured lenders £216,000
- Less demand on social, family, education, health and housing services estimated value £4,110,940

**Economic value is an important indicator in service provision and for every £1 put in by the Council the Centre generates a value of £25.11. Estimated total economic value £8,625,719 for £343,463 contribution from the Council.**

### Value of Housing Aid Centre Services

The Centre over many years has strived to develop services to meet the challenges and demands relevant to the time and our community profile. There are considerable returns in terms of investing in the services provided by the Centre. The value to service users and other parties are underpinned by ensuring that our staff are properly trained and supported. We consider the development of our services and staff to be of utmost importance to ensure high quality services and professional standards. This is clearly evidenced by our service user feedback systems. **It is a fair estimate that 5,000 individuals/organisations have directly or indirectly benefited from the services the Centre which provides.**

## **1. CHAIRPERSON REPORT**

This has been a very busy 15 months for the Centre, this year we have realigned our financial year to coincide with our primary contractual arrangements with the Council. This has been notified and agreed with the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator.

There has been some staff turnover and staff on maternity leave which has been accommodated by careful planning. This in turn has minimised any potential impact on service users. I would thank all staff for their positive input during this period. In terms of maternity I would take this opportunity to welcome the births of Karen's daughter, Zarah and Suzanne's daughter Aleisha.

We have settled well at York Street and during this period have invested in the property with expanded heating system (shared this with the landlord) and fully fitted smoke detection systems.

The Centre's Tenure Sustainment Service was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in July 2013, this was an unannounced Inspection as is normal practice now. The Centre achieved a Grade 5, very good with two grade 6's, excellent. I would congratulate all the staff for this achievement.

Our Housing, Advice, Advocacy and Information was audited under the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice in January 2014 and have been accredited at Type III until January 2018, once again I would congratulate all the staff for this achievement.

The Committee is committed to engaging with Management and Staff, they greatly appreciate the input of staff in terms of policy development within the Centre. I have particularly welcomed the input from the different services at Management Committee meetings. This has allowed a more detailed understanding by the Committee of the services we provide in South Ayrshire.

There has been considerable developments within the services we provided over the past 15 months, John will deal with these in more detail in his report. We continue to maintain high quality services and this is reflected in our service user feedback and of course as part of our regulatory and contractual obligation.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff for their preparedness to respond positively to the changes in role and adapt to deal with increased demands.

I would thank the Management Committee for their work and support over the past year. In the coming year we have major decisions to make in relation to our constitutional status, overall review of structure with the Centre and developmental planning.

Finally, as an organisation, we share a continuing interest in learning from experience and improving ways of preventing homelessness. The need for this is all the more important as Welfare Reform continues to impact on many Service Users.

## **2. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Within this Report I have used the statement of financial activities from our overall Financial Report which is submitted to Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator.

### **Income**

The Centre's income for this financial year was £449,805. South Ayrshire Council Grant and Contract was £438,796. The increase in this Grant from that of the previous year includes an element to cover premises and associated costs. Additional funding was secured via fundraising efforts and donations amounting to £5,735 with a further £5,274 being secured via grant sources to cover planned activities including those associated with our educational programmes.

### **Expenditure**

Expenditure for the year was £370,949, the increase from the previous year was due to largely to the extended accounting period of 15 months. This occurred because of a change to our financial year end. The primary expenditure heading was salaries including pensions which accounted for £325,501. Running costs of our new premises, upgrading systems are included in the overall expenditure.

### **Outcome**

This year the financials show a surplus of receipts of £78,856, the bulk of this is funding secured for activities scheduled for the year 14/15 and is expected to be spent during that period.

### **Projection 2014/2015**

I estimate that our expenditure for next year will be £359,368 of which £303,688 will be salaries including pensions. This includes a 30hr expansion of our Sustainment Service, full year costs for our First Home Service and full IT upgrade. With a projected income of £325,155 it is expected that the centre will show a deficit of £34,213 for the year 2014/15. This deficit includes additional costs for maternity cover. This amount will be offset by the surplus of £78,856 from the previous year (2013/14) and if deducted will leave an overall surplus of £44,643 in 2013/14

Changes to pension laws and in particular auto-enrolment is currently being assessed but will increase costs for the Centre.

### **Thanks**

I very much appreciate the staff's efficient record keeping which makes my job very easy. Special thanks to Suzanne, Karen, Marilyn and Leica for work on the day to day accounts and to John and Marilyn for work on projections and long term planning. Finally, a big thank you to Andrew Howatt, our Accountant.

**AYR HOUSING AID  
CENTRE  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL  
ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2014**

	2014 (01/04/13 - 30/06/14)			2013 (01/04/12 - 31/03/13)		
	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
<b>Incoming Resources</b>						
Funding - Shelter	-	-	-	-	9,000	9,000
Funding - public authorities	-	438,796	438,796	-	288,504	288,504
Fund raising/donations	5,735	-	5,735	1,102	-	1,102
Other income	5,250	-	5,250	-	-	-
Interest received	24	-	24	44	-	44
	<u>11,009</u>	<u>438,796</u>	<u>449,805</u>	<u>1,146</u>	<u>297,504</u>	<u>298,650</u>
<b>Resources Expended</b>						
<b>Charitable activities</b>						
Salaries inc pension costs	-	325,501	325,501	-	226,643	226,643
Members and staff expenses	-	6,230	6,230	-	5,238	5,238
Rent and rates	-	11,136	11,136	-	2,736	2,736
Heat light and telephone	600	5,652	6,252	500	4,740	5,240
Insurance	-	2,208	2,208	-	2,343	2,343
Repairs and maintenance	250	2,559	2,809	-	6,591	6,591
Stationery/computer consumables	1,024	8,564	9,588	-	8,377	8,377
Conferences and training	1,781	-	1,781	1,191	-	1,191
Library/subscriptions	1,330	-	1,330	1,800	-	1,800
	<u>4,985</u>	<u>361,850</u>	<u>366,835</u>	<u>3,491</u>	<u>256,668</u>	<u>260,159</u>
<b>Cost of generating funds</b>						
Miscellaneous expenses	50	422	472	50	186	236
<b>Governance costs</b>						
Accountancy	-	690	690	-	570	570
Regulatory costs	-	2,952	2,952	-	3,214	3,214
Total resources expended	<u>5,035</u>	<u>365,914</u>	<u>370,949</u>	<u>3,541</u>	<u>260,638</u>	<u>264,179</u>
Net movement in funds	5,974	72,882	78,856	-2,395	36,866	34,471
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward	29,509	52,133	81,642	31,904	15,267	47,171
Total funds carried forward	35,483	125,015	160,498	29,509	52,133	81,642

### **3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT**

#### **Opening**

This year's report covers 15 months which will allow the Centre to align with our main Contractual Period. We had sought and were given permission by OSCR to change our Financial Year. The Centre has been very busy over the past 15 months and has seen our services continue to develop.

The Centre is now in Year 2 of our Contract with South Ayrshire Council and I believe it continues to meet all the requirements of the Contract and beyond. The quarterly contract review meetings are very useful providing robust monitoring of our performance and an opportunity to discuss potential further development of current services and potential new services to meet changing demands.

We have settled well at 7 York Street and in partnership with our landlord we have upgraded the Central Heating System. The full Centre now has Central Heating prior to this we had to use portable electric heaters in part of the building. We have been part of a programme in fitting full smoke detectors and alarm system within the building. We will need to consider a rolling programme of decoration within the building over the next year.

The Management Committee have agreed a full upgrade of our IT system within the Centre. This has commenced and became operational in September 2014. Big thanks is due to Santander for the £5,000 grant which is contributing to the upgrade, this will be spent in 2014/15.

I have had the pleasure of working with many people over my 21 years at the Centre and I would thank all past and present members of the Management Committee for their support over the years. We have directly developed services to meet the needs of the people in South Ayrshire and influenced other services beyond. I am very proud of this and could not have achieved this without partnership with other agencies and the commitment of Staff and the Management Committee.

We have developed a first class statistical system and I can with confidence state that we have provided Housing Advice/Information Services in excess of 18,300 cases across South Ayrshire. This system has been further developed to accommodate contract reporting and enhanced quality control for the Centre. These systems could not operate without having a strong admin team, who I would extend my thanks to.

We provide a wide range of Services across South Ayrshire, these Services continue to develop to meet changing circumstances and demands. Demand remains high with particularly high demand in relation to the Size Criteria. I expect that demand from Welfare Reform sources is likely to increase in volume over the next few years.

#### **Links and Partnership**

While our relationship with the Council has changed we continue to value our links with the Statutory and Voluntary Agencies. These partnerships are in the interests of all concerned in particular the users of our services. I would take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to South Ayrshire Council for their continued financial support and encouragement. This support ranges from Elected Members, Senior Officials and Staff and is very much appreciated. We have daily contact with our colleagues in various sections of South Ayrshire Council, in particular Housing, Housing Benefit, Housing Options and Education.

The Centre deals with many other Departments within South Ayrshire Council and would extend our thanks to, in particular the front line staff. We continue to have regular contact with Housing and Council Tax Benefit staff and this is reflected in our large Benefit caseload. The Council engages with the Centre regarding relevant policy and strategy matters. This type of partnership is clearly beneficial to all concerned and serves the residents of South Ayrshire in a very positive manner. We have a common aim to provide quality Services to those in housing need and in doing so seek to safeguard Service Users tenure and prevent homelessness. The Centre enjoys a good professional relationship with Registered Social Landlords, in particular our colleagues at Ayrshire Housing.

I have been pleased to see our links with other Third Sector Organisations growing. We have seen increased inward and outward Referrals with North Ayr Resource Centre (Corner Shop) and we continue to link with SeAscape.

Over the period the Centre has built links with South Ayrshire Food Bank and issued 43 vouchers to Service Users.

The Centre has maintained links with Shelter, in particular relating to training opportunities.

### **Our Services**

Services as from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 are:-

1. Advice, Advocacy and Information
2. Tenure Sustainment
3. First Home, part of Education and Engagement
4. Education and Engagement
5. HEY (Housing Education 4 Youths) part of Education and Engagement

The first 3 of the above relates to direct provision to individual service users/families. The 4<sup>th</sup> concerns the provision of Education and Engagement in Housing and Homeless mainly in group settings with some outreach to Colleges, University and Ailsa Hospital.

For Services relating to individual Services Users/families our case load increased from 1,352 to 2,057. These Services use our standard case sheet which in turn populates our database with a wide range of fields, which then allows statistics to be collated and analysed to produce our Reports.

The structure of our Services encourage External and Internal Referrals, for example a Sustainment Officer can refer to the Advice Service if necessary and a number of individual Internal Referrals have come through to Advice from our Education and Engagement Service. The effectiveness and quality of our Services would not exist without the vital contribution from admin staff which supports all our services.

### **Advice, Advocacy and Information Service**

The Team comprises of Suzanne Slavin (Advice and Tenure Sustainment Manager), Jill McNaught (Housing Advice and Information Officer), Jacqui Gregory (Housing Advice and Information Officer), Leica Malkin (Tenant Advice and Information Officer, April 2014) and Joseph Sproat (Administrative Assistant) supported by the Chief Executive Officer. This Service once again has been accredited across all areas of Housing Law at Type III following Full Audit in January 2014.

Demand for this Service is very high and over the reporting year increased from 948 to 1,268.

There are a wide range of reasons why we open cases and indeed often there are multiple reasons for cases opening including:-

- Homelessness or threatened with Homelessness 524 (41%)
- Housing Benefit 420 (33%)
- Landlord Tenant disputes 177 (14%)
- Mortgage Arrears 52 (4.1%)

The primary role of the Tenant Advice and Information Officer is to work with South Ayrshire Council Tenants and Residents groups and individual tenants to assist in terms of welfare reform. The main challenge in 2015 will be the role out of universal credit, direct payments and electronic claims.

## User Feedback

As part of quality control we generate a Service User Feedback Report. Some comments from Service Users relating to this service included:-

- “I found the workers to be extremely supportive and helpful”
- “It was open and honest, not afraid to tell me if I was wrong”
- “The Service was first class, help was great”

## Size Criteria

In partnership with South Ayrshire Council the Centre has opened 534 cases relating to the Size Criteria within the report period. Taking this into account Advice and Advocacy has opened 1802 cases.

The main aim of this intervention was to minimise the impact of the size criteria on social tenants. In terms of outcome, affordability was improved in 227 cases (mainly DHP's), non-engagement 265, this was following attempts at contacts, home visits, letters and contact from the Council. In 40 cases Service Users advised that they would deal with the matter themselves. There was a positive outcome or likely positive outcome in 227 of the cases. The main source for positive outcome was DHP's although a number of cases was dealt with by exemptions or other rules which displace size criteria such as carers. In addition we have represented at a number of tribunals.

## Tenure Sustainment Service

The Team has 3 members of staff Neil Gray (Senior Tenure Sustainment Officer), Clare Lewis (Tenure Sustainment Officer) and Elspeth Lloyd (Tenure Sustainment Officer). This service is designed to and intervene at point of crisis where there is a risk of Service Users becoming homeless. There is often an intensive response required at the point of referral. There remains in many cases a short period at the start of the Service to allow positive engagement. In the Report period Tenure Sustainment was provided to 158 cases with 24 cases overlapping at the start of the year.

## Service User Feedback

As part of quality control we issue a Service User Feedback Report, some comments from Service Users relating to this service included:-

- “I do not know how I would have coped with the situation I was in without this service. It was excellent”
- “Friendly and efficient service”
- “Really good made to feel comfortable and excellent advice and help”

## Care Inspectorate

Our service was inspected in July 2013, the overall report was very good with high Grades for different elements of our Service. Our Grades are:-

5 – Very good for Quality of Support

6 – Excellent for Quality of Staff

6 – Excellent for Quality of Management and Leadership

I am very proud of the achievements within this Service and the fact this is recognised as part of the Inspection and Service User Feedback.

## Education and Engagement Service

This Service incorporates HEY and First Home. The Team comprises of Sarah Bone (Senior Education and Engagement Officer), Suzanne Moffat (First Home Officer) supported by the Chief Executive Officer.

In overall terms Education and Engagement covers:-

- Outreach to Ayr College and West of Scotland University
- Outreach to Ailsa Hospital
- Support to Veterans First Point Ayrshire
- Links with South Ayrshire Seniors Forum
- HEY (Housing Education for Youths)
- First Home

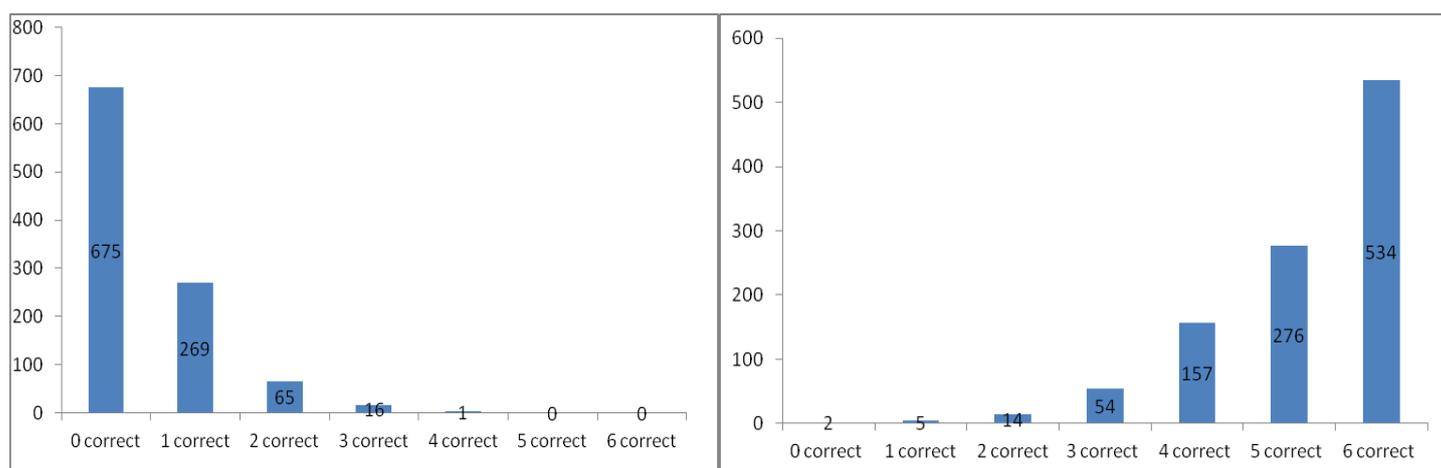
Our outreach at the Hospitals has had limited success although it has generated case work for our Advice Team. The effectiveness of this is being discussed with South Ayrshire Council. What has become clear is our attendance at awareness raising events which has had a positive impact. It has raised the profile of the Centre and our Services with students, patients and staff within Education and Health. It has been recognised by raising awareness at what we do allows those in these locations to actively signpost Service Users to us as soon as possible. Our work with South Ayrshire Seniors Forum and the Road Shows has been a positive process. Group work has an important role to play for our Services and future development.

The overall vision of Education and Engagement in relation to our work in schools is to provide basic, intermediate and advance sessions on housing, homelessness and related issues with the aim of encouraging learning/knowledge, responsible citizens, confident individuals, good tenants, independent and informed young people.

### HEY (Housing Education for Youths)

We engaged with all the Secondary Schools in South Ayrshire providing this Service to over 1,179 pupils via their Personal Social Education (PSE) lessons. This would not have been possible without the support of the Head and Guidance Teachers within Schools.

The model used HEY sought to involve Pupils and Teachers and to assess current knowledge through an initial Questionnaire and this process was repeated towards the end of lesson 2.



As can be seen from the above there was a complete lack of knowledge of Housing and Homelessness but by the end of the lessons this was reversed. The feedback from Pupils and Teachers has been very positive and the lessons will be updated and re-run each academic year. **Please note that this programme has been nominated for a COSLA award.**

## Building Positive Futures Programme

HEY has also been partner in the Building Positive Futures Programme, this is an early intervention partnership which targeted 12 pupils with 6 from Ayr Grammar and 6 from Forehill Primary. This was an intense Programme which was received well by the pupils, teachers and the schools. This has been identified as an example of good practice by HMI. **Please note that this programme has been nominated for a COSLA award.**

## Primary 7 Programme

This was a pilot programme build on the success of the 4<sup>th</sup> Year Programme within the Secondary Schools. The aim was to provide a Session which was fun and interactive. This was age appropriate and was very much enjoyed by the pupils and the teacher. This was delivered between January and June 2014 and although the target was delivered in half of the Primary Schools we delivered in all 41. Over 1,068 pupils received the Sessions.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Year Pupils

The Centre was approached by Secondary Schools to provide an advanced Programme for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils. We presented an advanced Programme which dealt with in more detail moving on, which also included a part on university accommodation. 105 pupils received this session with very positive feedback.

We have also worked with Invergarven School, Girvan and the Carers Centre.

## Overall Feedback Education and Engagement

### Pupils

- “It was fun”
- “Interesting now have an understanding of housing 16+”
- “Changed my perception of homeless people”
- “I now understand a lot more about what you face when you move out”
- “Good session thank you very much for coming”

### Teachers

- “I would be interested in receiving an input from HEY, regarding law and tenancy agreements”
- “Well led, clearly presented and nice manner with pupils”
- “Pupils had few facts prior to these Sessions”
- “Worthwhile input into our PSE”
- “Enthusiastic and engaging delivery- pupils enjoyed”

## First Home

The Service is provided by Suzanne Moffat (First Home Officer) supported by Sarah Bone (Senior Education and Engagement Officer) and John Mulholland (Chief Executive Officer). The key aim of the Service is to ensure that 16 -24 years old applying for housing from South Ayrshire Council are given accurate information of the Application process and responsibilities of becoming a tenant and to assess their readiness for becoming a tenant. In a number of cases young people choose to suspend their Application as they are not ready for the responsibilities of a tenancy. Within this age group tenancy failure is relatively high.

This Service covers Applications for Housing where they have selected Maybole and Girvan areas. The Referrals come from the Area Offices in Maybole and Girvan.

In the Report year the Service opened 68 cases and at time of writing this Report there was 43 cases active some of which are cases carried over. When a Service User is allocated a house a Referral can be made to SeAscape to provide support in the early stages of the tenancy. (8 referrals were made from July 2013 to June 2014).

The Service over the year has continued to develop and there has been discussion in terms of potential development. During the year we have worked on the development of the “First Home Programme” with Partners. We secured funding for 2014/15 to run Pilots of the Programme. Its primary aim is to build up home skills of the participants on a week to week basis which is all designed to aid sustainability within tenancies. This programme commenced in October 2014.

### Feedback from Service Users

- “I thought it was very helpful, friendly, and lots of good information about housing”
- “Fantastic it was good to get the help, been amazing and really helpful”
- “It helped me get organised and set up in my first home”

### Feedback from Parents

- “The service given to my children was very good”
- “Excellent service”

### Impact of Services

Due to our different Services the measured impact can be short, medium or long term. Services which are geared to individuals/families are measured in terms of social and economic benefit. Our group work, in particular, in the Schools is more long term. The information given may be retained and allow informed choice for young people later. This is, of course, carried over into our First Home Service in the future.

The impact and our statistics are effective by our work with the Council on the size criteria.

The largest primary problem raised with the Centre continues to be homelessness or threatened with homelessness, 684 cases (540 last year), from our Advice and Sustainment Services. This accounts for around 33% of our caseload from these services. This percentage has been impacted by our size criteria work, 534 cases if this was taken out the percentage cases relating to homelessness would have been just under 45%.

Our overall caseload involving 16-24 year olds accounts for 314 cases, (262 last year). From this age group 101 were involved in the homeless system (90 last year). There were 946 children involved in all our cases, (839 last year). Of this 419 were involved in homelessness, (206 last year).

**Within our caseload there are around 384 cases, (243 last year) where there is a possibility of homeless prevention work and the Centre prevented homelessness in 274 cases of these.**

Cases from those who were employed was 412 (484 last year) of these 181 (159 last year) were in part time employment, cases for unemployed was 584 (446 last year). There were 594 (305 last year) cases from a person who were sick/ill. There has been a marked increase from Service Users in employment who is struggling to meet ongoing costs. Despite growth in the economy and changes to Welfare Benefits in relation to sick/ill we have noted a growth both in terms of unemployed and ill/sick using the Services of the Centre.

### Rent Arrears Recovery/Future Rent Projection

Over the past 12 years we have been monitoring arrears recovered to Rent Accounts. We have identified landlords and some of this has been achieved through advice and representation in Housing and Council Tax Benefit cases. The table below highlights monies recovered which in many cases prevented eviction and homelessness across all sectors. Homeless prevention in all Sectors reduces demands on resources in the Public

Sector, in particular homeless temporary accommodation. Many Service Users have in addition benefited from our Tenure Sustainment Service.

Landlord/Lender	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total to date
SAC	£69,274.07	£79,822.66	£75,756.39	<b>£191,717.33</b>	<b>£770,846.83</b>
RSL	£8,367.32	£14,002.24	£20,503.55	<b>£3,128.19</b>	<b>£138,886.23</b>
Private	£22,700.25	£52,854.52	£49,824.89	<b>£32,028.68</b>	<b>£343,774.56</b>
Owner Occupied		£4,027.22	£45,337.80	<b>£5,594</b>	<b>£56,024.56</b>
Family				<b>£9,371.56</b>	<b>£9,371.56</b>
<b>Total</b>	£100,341.64	£150,706.64	£191,422.63	<b>£241,839.76</b>	<b>£1,318,903.74</b>

The table above, in particular South Ayrshire Council highlights increased co-operation in terms of rent arrear cases. Our new Service Profile since July 2012 has continued to facilitate positive recovery and homeless prevention outcomes. Our Sustainment Services continues to work our Advice and Information Service. Recovery amounts remains high. It is clear throughout the Report period that an increased number of Service Users are having real and sustained financial problems and this is partly reflected in the increase of arrears in the rented sector. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year we have monitored the above which started in 2002/03, the end totals are cumulative.

In terms of projected future rent on tenancies I have estimated a value of;

**Public Sector 285 tenancies x £75 (average rent) x 52 weeks = £ 1,111,500**  
**RSL 12 tenancies x £90 (average rent) x 52 weeks = £ 56,160**  
**Private Sector 74 tenancies x £110 (average rent) x 52 weeks = £ 423,280**  
**£ 1,590,940**

Estimated Value to secured lenders £216,000

### **Homeless Prevention**

The Centre firmly believes that early intervention prevents homelessness, in particular financial homelessness. The continued development of a Homeless Intervention and Prevention Service within South Ayrshire is a major contributor to meeting strategic objectives and this has been incorporated into the Services we provide. This is clearly part of the overall housing options agenda, obviously in many cases the best option would be to prevent homelessness and sustain current accommodation where it is safe to do so.

There are considerable cost savings in prevention work including temporary accommodation, administration of case, investigation and other ancillary costs. Another important factor is the personal and social benefit relating to health and education for those who are prevented from becoming homeless through positive intervention. **The Centre directly prevented homelessness, in 274 cases this year, an estimated saving to the public purse of £2,466,000. The formula used is A x B x C**

A :- Average weekly rent for temporary accommodation (£300)

B :- Number of cases (274)

C :- Average time in temporary accommodation ( 30 weeks)

As illustrated above there are considerable cost savings in preventative measures including temporary accommodation, administration of case, investigation and other ancillary costs. Another important factor is the personal, health, education, criminal justice and social benefit to those who are prevented from coming into the homeless system through positive intervention. Research has highlighted the costs of homeless per household could range between £15,000 and £83,000. In a period of 10 years the Centre has directly prevented homelessness in over 1,856 cases that has had considerable economic benefit to South Ayrshire Council, Central Government and social benefit to potentially homeless households. Early notice of potential

homelessness allows Agencies a greater chance of preventing homelessness and therefore intervention does increase homeless prevention outcomes. There is clear evidence of Social Return on Investment (SROI) in terms of funding homeless prevention services, **spend to save**. On the minimum amount, **I would estimate a further saving in terms of homelessness prevention of £4,110,000.**

### **Value of Services**

Our Services provide a range of values including health and wellbeing, educational and economic. The measure for some of these services are more medium to long term such as the HEY and First Home Projects. Therefore they do not form part of our economic measures. Nevertheless they are vital elements within the Services we provide and are of considerable value to school pupils and young adults provided with these services.

**The Council contributed £343,463 (this does not include costs for Education and Engagement, First Home Service and additional expenditure for 2015/16). We would estimate the value of our Service directly and indirectly to the Council, Central Government, Landlords and Service Users to be £8,625,719.**

**Economic and social value are important indicators in Service provision and for every £1 put in by the Council the Centre generates a value of £25.11.**

In terms of our overall Services many people benefit directly and indirectly. For example Teachers knowledge on housing and homelessness is expanded by the provision of the HEY Project and other activities within Education and Engagement. We have provided this Programme to around 2,500 young people over this Report Period. Our regular contact with Council Staff and Third Party Organisations are beneficial to all parties.

**It is a fair estimate that 5,000 Individuals/Organisations have directly or indirectly benefited from the Services the Centre provides.**

### **Service User Feedback**

We have developed our Service User Feedback within our Housing Advice/Information, Tenure Sustainment and First Home Services. We sent out a total of 247 forms to advice cases, 67 were returned; some of the comments from Service Users are listed below:

- ‘The Quality standard has been set for several years now and has stayed the same with the move to the new premises’
- The Service we received was excellent and well explained
- ‘Fantastic, valid, helpful and very understanding’

For our Tenure Sustainment Service we sent out 101 questionnaires and 26 of these were returned. For our First Home Service 44 questionnaires were sent out and 38 were returned.

I am proud that feedback is so positive but we must always consider other methods of gauging Service Users views and this has been part of discussions within the Team and the Management Committee.

### **Centre Development**

These Services interlink within the Centre and beyond and have the flexibility to meet changing demands. This requires robust internal systems and strong lines of communications with the Council and Partner Agencies.

Information, and Advocacy, Tenure Sustainment and First Home Services are directly and positively impacting on the lives of Service Users and Third Parties. They continue to meet the many challenges and objectives being set by Local and Central Government. All of these Services have produced Internal Reports which consider potential further development. In terms of development we secured funding for the Tenant and Information Post in 2013/14 to work with tenants with particular regards to Welfare Reform. This requires to develop further with our partners to ensure that Services are accessible for people in South Ayrshire relating to Welfare Reform. The further development of First Home is important and should it include the whole of South Ayrshire. In 2014/15 we are running our First Home Programme developing skills and understanding for young people who could be tenants in the near future.

As Welfare Reform continues the next few years will create a number of challenges and demands across all Sectors. The extension of the size criteria to the Social Sector and the phased introduction of Universal Credit will create demand across the Centre's Services. We have actively engaged with the Council and other Partners on this vital issue and how this issue is not going away.

There has been considerable legislative activity in relation to Social and Private Rented Sector with significant changes which will all impact on the Centre, this may increase demands for Advice and Information services over the next few years.

One of our primary strengths is our staff. Their commitment and dedication underpins the Services we provide. The Committee has a long proud history of supporting staff training and development and we are now about to enter the final stages of meeting the requirements for Registration with the Scottish Social Services Council for Staff Qualifications. Indeed CEO and the Advice and Sustainment Manager has registered with the Scottish Social Services Council.

## **Conclusion**

This has been a very busy time for the Centre. Our Services continues to meet our objectives both in terms of our Contracts and aspirations.

We continue to review the needs of the Organisation and the Service Users to ensure that we are providing the highest possible quality Services. The feedback from Service Users, Inspectors and Auditors all confirm that we are achieving high standards and I am very proud of the achievements of the Staff and Management Committee.

I would extend my thanks to Suzanne, Karen, Jill, Neil, Jacqui, Sarah, Suzie, Clare, Joseph, Leica, Elspeth who started with the Centre at the end of May, Jennifer Wearing who moved on and Jenny who also moved on via India, for their work and support throughout the past year. I firmly believe one of the main strengths of the Centre is our teamwork and commitment to the aims and objectives of the Organisation. I would finally thank the members of the Management Committee for their continued commitment and support.

## 4. STATISTICAL REPORT SUMMARY 2013-14

The source for these statistics is taken from our Microsoft Access Database from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, The full statistical report consists of 26 charts. Please note these statistics are subject to change as cases close and are accurate as at the time of writing this Report.

### 1. CASES OPENED OVER PAST 3 YEARS

The Centre opened 2,056 cases between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 (1,352). This includes 263 rural cases opened, (233 last year).

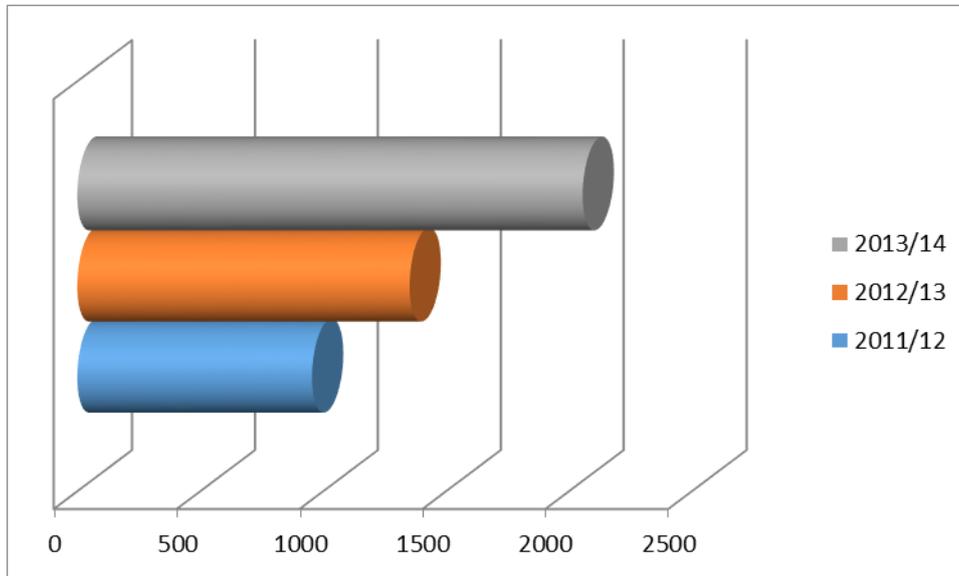


Chart 1

### 2. SERVICES (Chart 3 of Annual Report)

We provide a range of Services to individuals and families. As can be seen from the graph below the majority of cases are opened through Advice Work, 1,268 (948 cases). The First Home Service opened 94 cases. Tenure Sustainment opened 158 (116 cases). Size Criteria Referrals from the Council opened 536 (this includes 2 Welfare Reform cases).

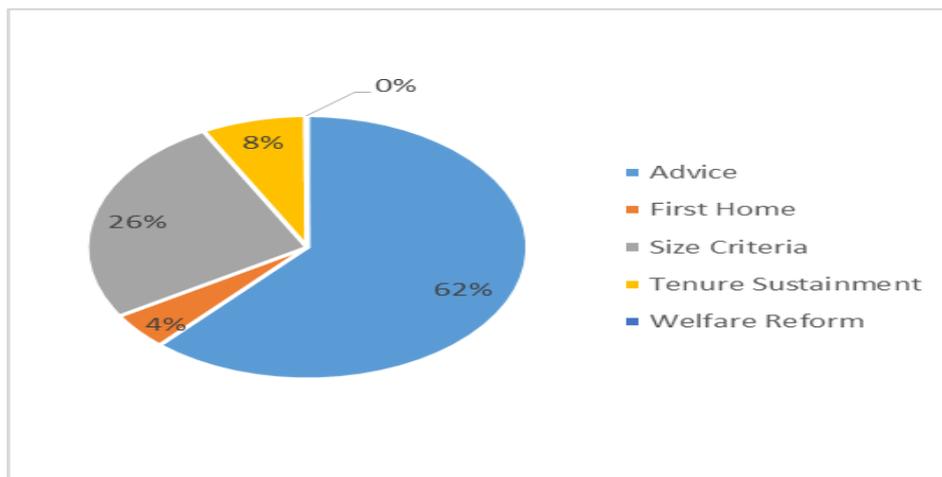


Chart 2

### 3. DISABLEMENT (Chart 7 of Annual Report)

233 Service Users had a physical disability (159), 321 had a mental disability (217) and there were 231 cases where Service Users have both physical and mental disabilities (142). A total of 785 had some sort of disability compared to 518 last year.

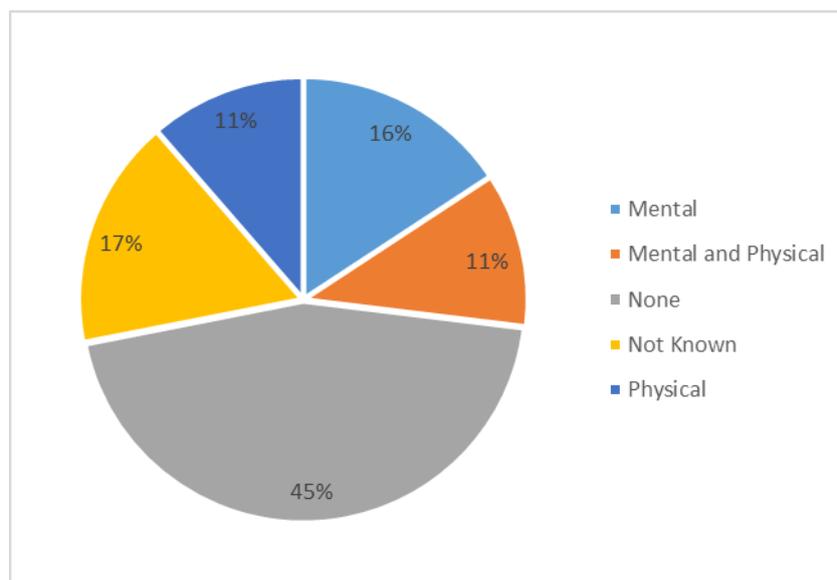


Chart 3

### 4. REFERRAL AGENCY(Chart 10 of the Annual Report)

The self/friend category continues to be the primary method of referral, 878 (572). Callers who are aware of our Service often recommend it to others. Referrals from the Local Authority Housing Department were 855, (397 last year) which is a dramatic increase. The total number of cases referred by South Ayrshire Council including the Housing Department were 936, (484 last year), 26 of these were from Social Work, (26 last year). There were 7 Referrals from Councillors (9 last year) and 4 from members of Parliament, (2 last year). Please note we had 19 Referrals from Money Advice, 67 Referrals from SeAscape and 4 from Solicitors. I would also note 20 cases were Referrals from Housing Associations, (42 last year). There was 38 referrals from the Corner Shop (North Ayr Resource Centre) and 9 from Veterans Organisations.

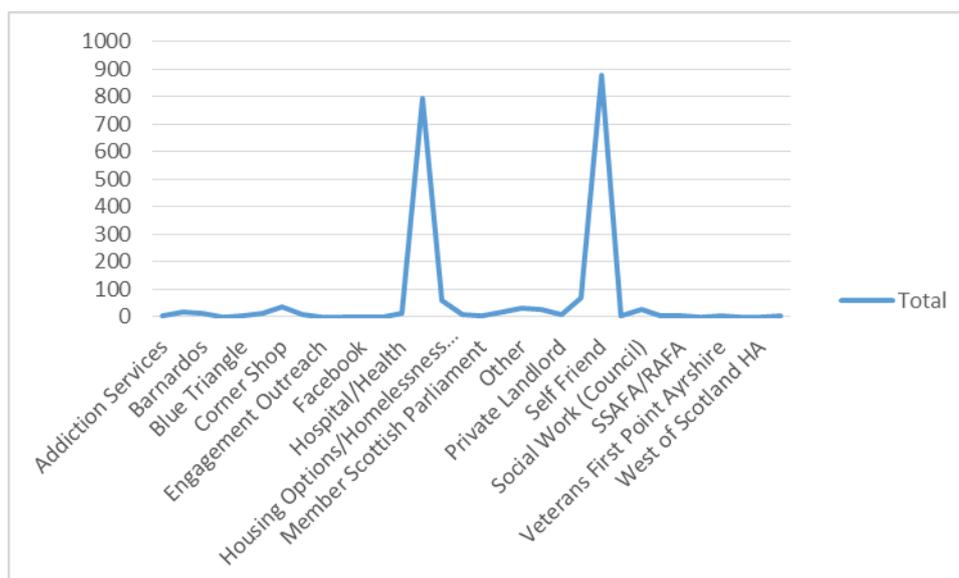


Chart 4

## 5. EMPLOYMENT TYPES (Chart 11 of the Annual Report)

The majority of our caseload was from those who were unemployed, 584 (446 last year). Those who were employed were 379, (384 last year). We have noted a continued high caseload from the employed and many of the problems relate to multi-debt issues which often encompass housing matters. In terms of sick/ill there were 494 cases, (305 last year). There is 114 cases from retired and 63 from students with 43 cases from carers.

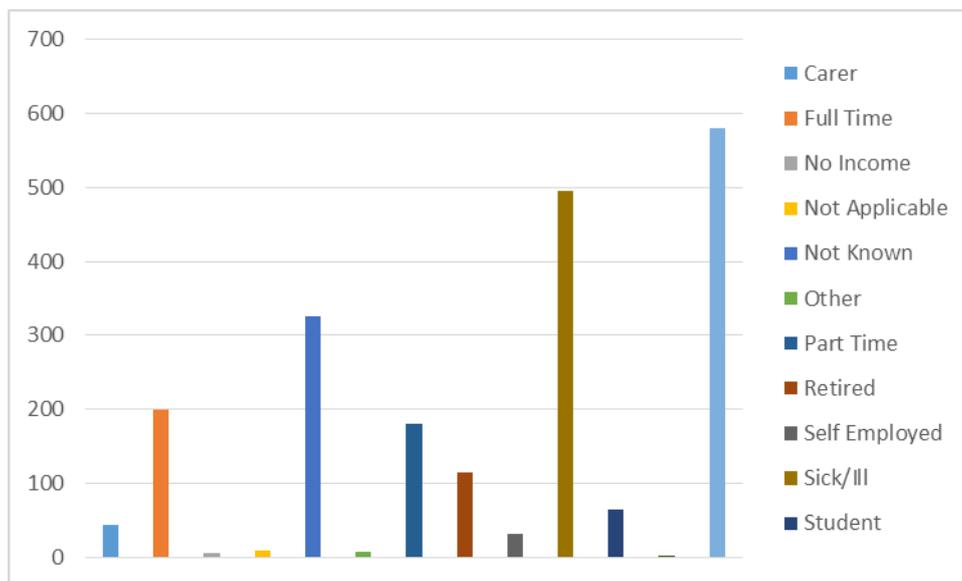


Chart 5

## 6. INTERNAL ACTION PLAN (Chart 17 of the Annual Report)

Homelessness continues to be our largest primary problem in our cases. There were 684 homeless cases opened, (532 last year). There were 46 cases wanting a transfer and 240 cases seeking accommodation. As can be seen from the chart below there were 1,306 internal action plan problems relating to Benefit cases, 1,099 (608 last year) of them were Housing Benefit. There were 178 cases relating to landlord tenant problems with 242 cases relating to repair, most of which were in the Private Sector. There was 111 cases relating to Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Please note there can be numerous problems in each case.

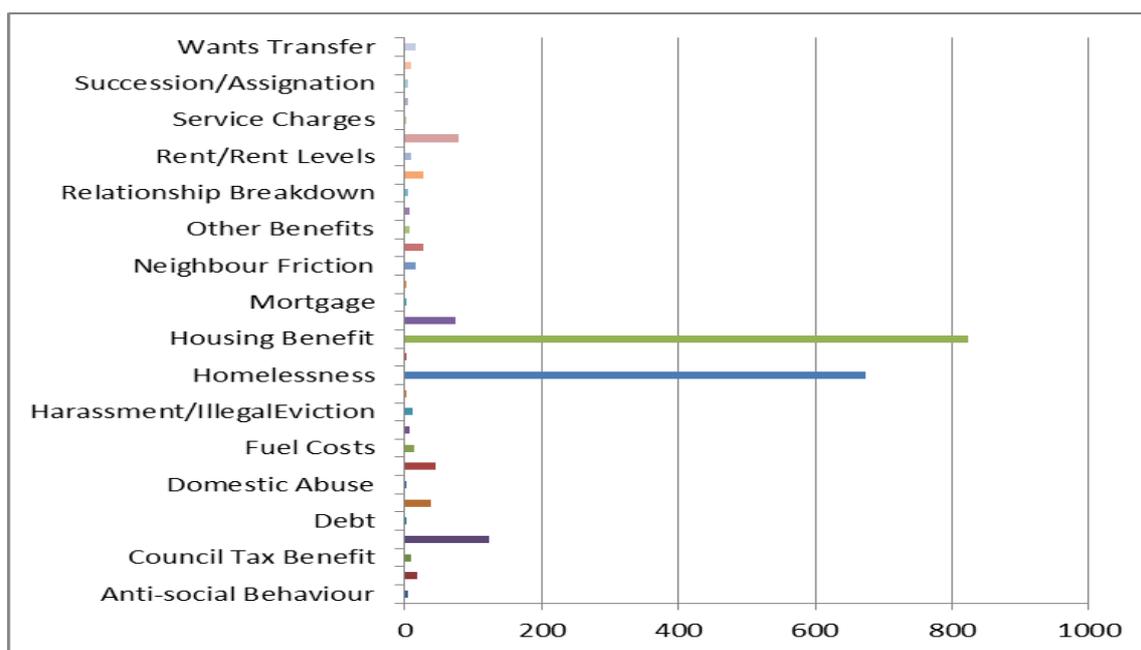


Chart 6

## **7. HOMELESS FIGURES OVER PAST 5 YEARS (Chart 19 of the Annual Report)**

This chart shows homeless cases dealt with by the Centre over the past 5 years. It should be noted these figures include actual roofless clients, statutory homeless clients and those threatened with homelessness. Cases concerning homelessness have increased from 224 in 1998/99 to 684 this year. This is an increase on last year, 532 and in percentage terms is 32% of all cases opened, (39% last year). If size criteria was taken out of the percentage there would be 43% of cases.

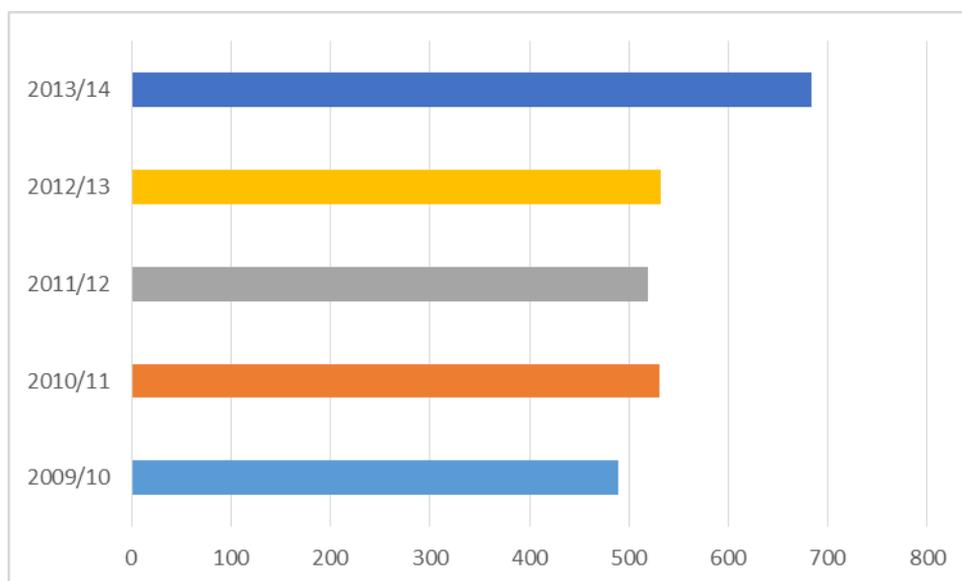


Chart 7

## **8. REASON FOR BECOMING HOMELESS (Chart 22 of the Annual Report)**

There were 145 cases involving rent arrears in the Public Sector, (91 last year). It is important to note that many of these will be in the threatened with homeless group. 42 of our cases were arrears from the Private Sector, (34 last year). Domestic violence and relationship breakdown continues to be a major cause of homelessness, 97 cases (69 last year). Numbers of callers whose primary cause of homelessness was Housing Benefit problems was 89 (88 last year.) Callers made homeless due to their tenancy coming to an end were 12 (11 last year). 29 of our callers became homeless due to family or friends unwilling to let them stay any longer. Repossession across Sectors accounted for 99, this includes callers threatened with repossession where an order has been granted.

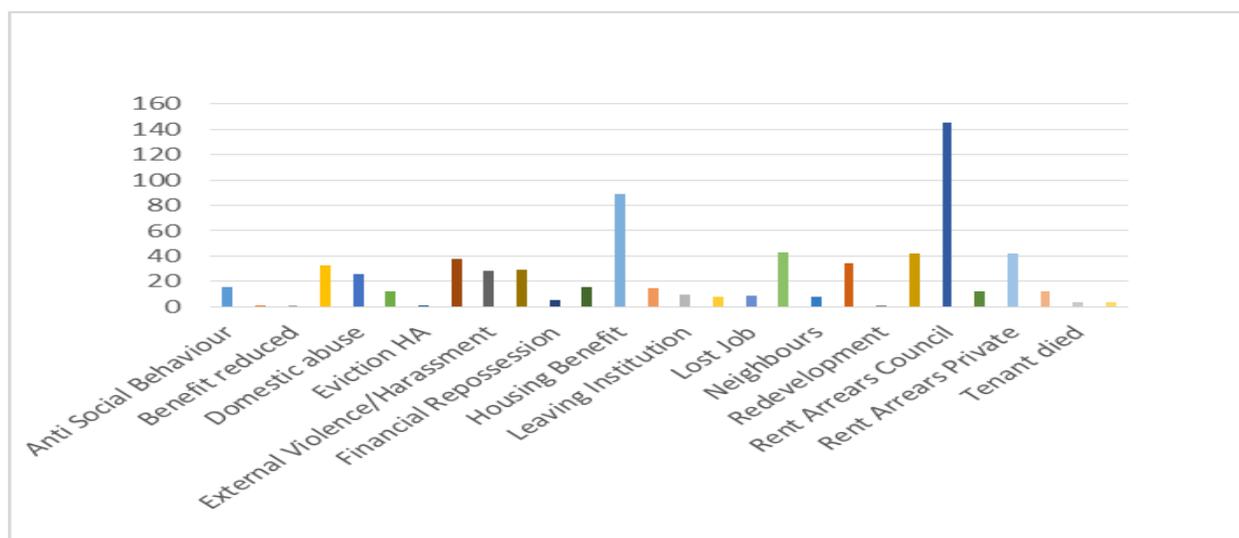


Chart 8

## 9. OUTCOME OF CLOSED CASES (Chart 24 of the Annual Report)

In year 2013/14 the Centre closed 95% of cases opened, (92.6% last year). With an increased emphasis being placed on prevention of homelessness we hope to work closely with landlords and the Homeless Section to increase prevention. In this period the Centre prevented homelessness in 274 cases, (224 last year). This has been made more achievable by improved Referrals and the impact of our Tenure Sustainment Service. Please note there can be more than one outcome per case.

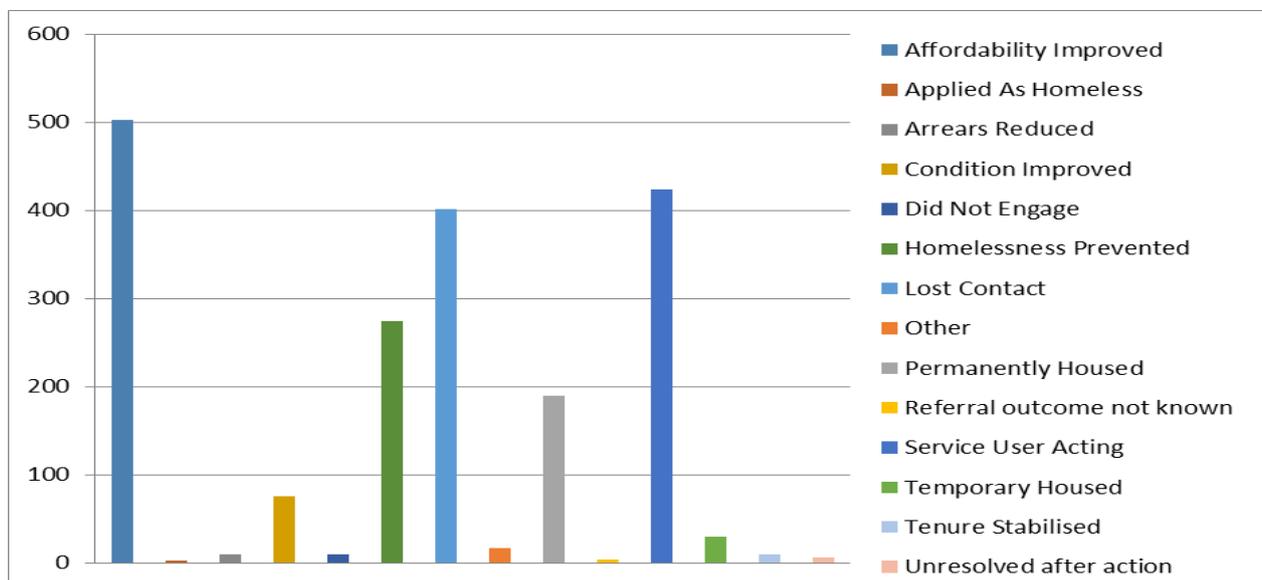


Chart 9

## 10. CASE ASSESSMENT (Chart 26 of the Annual Report)

This graph relates to an assessment of the outcomes. In the vast majority of cases closed there was a positive outcome or a likelihood of a positive outcome. It is interesting to note the level of lost contact cases. The Centre has systems in place to minimise possibility of lost contact and to follow up contacts, this is often vital in terms of prevention of homeless.

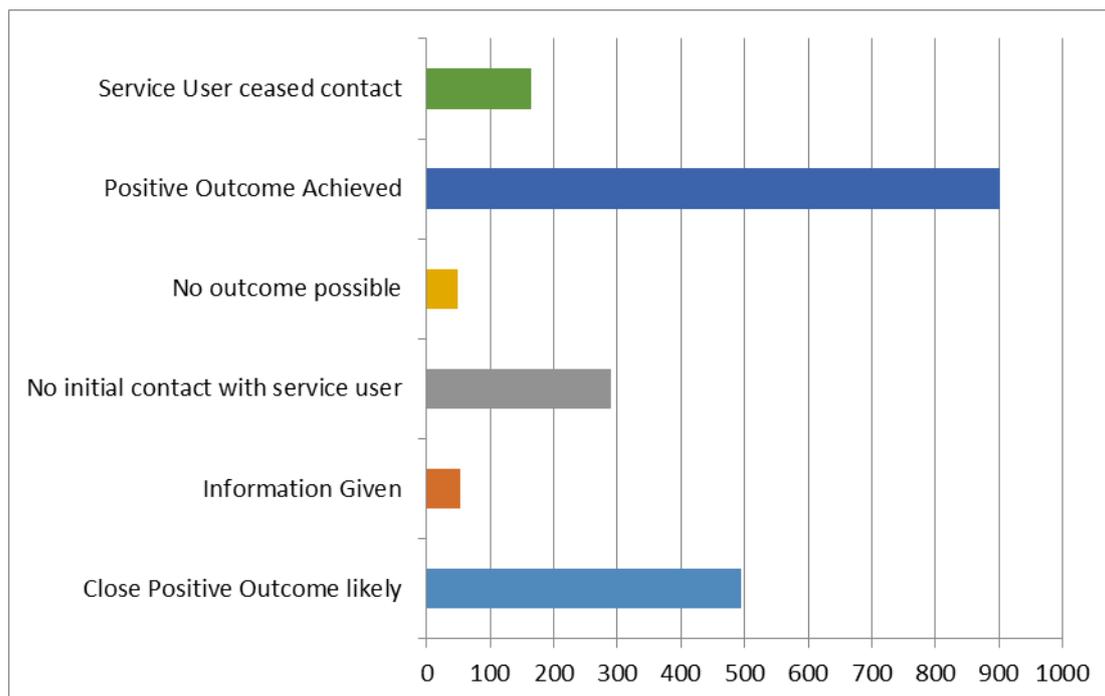


Chart 10